

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

EUR-12 IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01 AGR-05 COME-00 TRSE-00

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P R 051124Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1317

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3698

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, CD, US

SUBJ: THAI REACTIONS TO THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA

REF: A. BANGKOK 3422; B. BANGKOK 3549

SUMMARY: THAI OFFICIALS LINK THE RATIONALE FOR AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND TO THE U.S. ABILITY TO HELP CAMBODIA. THEY ARE MORE ANXIOUS TO SEE US DO SOMETHING FOR THE KHMER THAN TO TAKE ACTION THEMSELVES. END SUMMARY.

1. KOSON SINTHAWANON, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD THE DCM MARCH 4 THAT THE KEY TO THAI THINKING ON THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES IN THAILAND WAS CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON EQUIPMENT AND FOOD AID TO CAMBODIA. THE NAVAL ATTACHE REPORTS THAT THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE OF THE ROYAL THAI NAVY, NORMALLY CALM TO THE POINT OF TORPOR, HAS IN THE PAST TWO DAYS BECOME ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE CURRENT INFORMATION ON THE TACTICAL SITUATION IN CAMBODIA.

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2. THE "BANGKOK POST" OF MARCH 5 QUOTES SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, AIR VICE MARSHAL SITHI SAWETSILA, AS SAYING THAT THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND WOULD BE MEANINGLESS AND USELESS IF THE USG FAILS TO SAVE PHNOM PENH FROM FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF THE KHMER REBELS. SITHI IS FURTHER QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WAS CONSULTED ON, AND AGREED TO, THE 18-MONTH DEADLINE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN FORCES THAT THE SENI GOVERNMENT PROPOSED, ALTHOUGH HE ADDED THAT WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE THE SUBJECT OF FURTHER CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE MFA AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. COMMENT: SITHI HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A MOST STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND. IF THE "POST" HAS QUOTED HIM ACCURATELY, HIS STATEMENT REPRESENTS THE REVERSAL IN THINKING ABOUT THE UNITED STATES OF AN INFLUENTIAL THAI.

3. THE LEFTIST VERNACULAR DAILY "SIANG MAI," IN A MARCH 4 EDITORIAL, LABELS THOSE WHO WANT U.S. SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIA AS FASCISTS, AND URGES THAT THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE BE LEFT ALONE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS.

4. THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE PAPER "HSING HSIEN" REPORTS A MARCH 2 INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN. THE PAPER QUOTES CHATCHAI AS SAYING THAT EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA HAS A GREAT EFFECT ON THAI SECURITY, THE RTG SHOULD NOT ALLOW THE USE OF U.S. BASES IN THAILAND FOR AIR RAIDS AGAINST THE KHMER COMMUNISTS.

5. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS PICKED UP A FEBRUARY 28 ASSOCIATED PRESS STORY ATTRIBUTED TO U.S. DEFENSE OFFICIALS. THEY ALLEGEDLY SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO SERIOUS MILITARY THREAT TO SOUTH VIETNAM OR THAILAND IF CAMBODIA FELL. THIS TYPE OF SPECULATION IS UNHELPFUL HERE. ONE ASPECT OF THE STORY, HOWEVER, HAS PROVEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY PROPHECIC. "U.S. OFFICIALS, IN EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF CAMBODIA'S POSSIBLE COLLAPSE, SAID THAILAND WOULD PROBABLY REASSESS ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES AND MIGHT ASK U.S. FORCES TO LEAVE."  
KINTNER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** COLLECTIVE SECURITY, COMBAT OPERATIONS, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS, POLITICAL SITUATION, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 MAR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** RowellE0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975BANGKO03698  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750077-0055  
**From:** BANGKOK  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 BANGKOK 3422, 75 BANGKOK 3549  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** RowellE0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 09 JUL 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <09 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THAI REACTIONS TO THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, TH, CB, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006